

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

MARTHA HOOPER,

Appellant,

v.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH
SERVICES,

Respondent.

) Case No. ALLO-05-0012

)
) FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF
) LAW AND ORDER OF THE BOARD

I. INTRODUCTION

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came on for hearing before the Personnel Appeals Board, WALTER T. HUBBARD, Chair; BUSSE NUTLEY, Vice Chair; and GERALD L. MORGEN, Member, on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated August 8, 2005. The hearing was held at the office of the Personnel Appeals Board in Olympia, Washington, on December 21, 2005.

Appearances. Appellant Martha Hooper was present and represented herself *pro se*. Robert Swanson, Human Resource Manager, represented Respondent Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Background. Appellant's immediate supervisor, Edith Hitchings, Acting Regional Administrator for Children's Administration/Department of Children and Family Services, submitted a Classification Questionnaire (CQ) dated November 16, 2004, requesting that Appellant's Human Resource Consultant (HRC) 1 position number NQ70 be reallocated to the HRC 2 level. DSHS

1 Human Resource Manager Julia Lance reviewed Appellant's CQ, and by letter dated March 21,
2 2005, Ms. Lance informed Appellant that the duties and responsibilities assigned to position
3 number NQ70 did not meet the allocation criteria of an HRC 2. Ms. Lance based her determination
4 on the class specifications for an HRC 1 and 2 and on a desk audit she conducted with Appellant
5 and Ms. Hitchings, and she concluded Appellant's duties best fit the HRC 1 classification because
6 they were technical and routine in nature.

7
8 Appellant appealed Ms. Lance's decision to the Department of Personnel, and on July 13, 2005,
9 Paul L. Peterson, Personnel Hearings Officer, held an allocation review. By letter dated August 8,
10 2005, Mr. Peterson informed Appellant that she did not meet the requirements of the HRC 2
11 position. Mr. Peterson concluded that Appellant was relied on as a payroll expert and that she
12 performed mainly payroll and attendance training to staff. Since Appellant reported directly to the
13 regional administrator and not a human resource manager, Mr. Peterson further determined that she
14 did not meet the requirements of the HRC 1 position indicated on her CQ. Instead, Mr. Peterson
15 concluded that Appellant's position should be allocated to the Human Resource Consultant
16 Assistant (HRCA) classification.

17
18 **Summary of Appellant's Argument.** Appellant asserts that ninety-five percent of her duties are
19 related to human resource (HR) work, and she contends she is the primary contact for HR matters in
20 her region. Appellant further contends that she consults with the Human Resource Department
21 (HRD) in the headquarters division when necessary. Appellant asserts that while she does provide
22 guidance to staff regarding attendance and payroll matters, those duties comprise only five percent
23 of her workload. Additionally, Appellant argues she is a lead worker over an HRC 1 staff person,
24 she independently performs her duties, she is responsible for understanding the rules pertaining to
25 HR, she makes decisions and judgments, and she advises the regional administrator on HR matters.
26 Therefore, Appellant argues she should be allocated at the HRC 2 level. In addition, Appellant

1 argues the agency designated her position to the HRC 1 classification on her CQ, and therefore, she
2 argues the HRCA classification is inconsistent with her CQ and does not adequately reflect her
3 duties.

4
5 **Summary of Respondent's Argument.** Respondent acknowledges that Appellant does a great job
6 of performing her duties. Respondent asserts, however, that while Appellant's position requires
7 some specialized knowledge and familiarity of the rules, her position has a paraprofessional role
8 and her duties are technical in nature. Respondent contends that the higher level HR positions
9 require more complex, professional tasks such as drafting disciplinary letters for an appointing
10 authority's signature, which are different than the more technical aspects of maintaining personnel
11 files. Respondent acknowledges that the agency approved CQ for position number NQ70
12 designated that position to the HRC 1 classification.

13
14 **Primary Issue.** Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated
15 to the Human Resource Consultant Assistant classification should be affirmed.

16
17 **Relevant Classifications.** Human Resource Consultant Assistant, class code 19101; Human
18 Resource Consultant 1, class code 19102; Human Resource Consultant 2, class code 19103.

19
20 The definition for a Human Resource Consultant Assistant states: "Performs a variety of
21 paraprofessional or technical duties . . . as human resource support to management and staff." The
22 distinguishing characteristics include working independently under general supervision and within
23 established guidelines, applying specialized knowledge and using independent judgment to resolve
24 technical and paraprofessional problems, interpreting and applying established rules and
25 procedures, and may lead or supervise support staff.

1 The definition for a Human Resource Consultant 1 states: “Performs routine professional human
2 resource duties.” The distinguishing characteristics indicate an HRC 1 is the first professional level
3 in the HR series, and the duties include working under regular guidance of a higher level human
4 resource professional or manager who typically reviews work in progress and provides direction. In
5 addition, an HRC 1 may have a specific assignment that is mostly routine and of limited scope, may
6 work in a training capacity in preparation for a higher level, and may lead or supervise support staff.

7
8 The definition for a Human Resource Consultant 2 states: “Consults with and provides assistance
9 to managers and employees regarding human resource issues.” The distinguishing characteristics
10 indicate that an HRC 2 works at an experienced professional level and the work performed is
11 complex rather than routine.

12
13 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best
14 describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a
15 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that
16 work is performed. Also, a position review is not a comparison of work performed by employees in
17 similar positions. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular
18 position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the
19 class which best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v.
20 Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

21
22 Appellant’s CQ indicates she is a human resource lead worker who spends the majority of her time
23 providing professional independent level personnel consultation to the Regional Administrator, as
24 well as area administrators and supervisors. Appellant also provides training and support to a part-
25 time HRC 1. After reviewing the class specifications in the Human Resource Consultant series, we
26 have determined that several of the duties overlap with varying degrees of responsibility. In this

1 case, Appellant's duties are most in line with the HRC 1 classification, which is the position
2 indicated on the agency approved CQ for position NQ70.

3
4 **Conclusion.** The appeal on exceptions by Appellant that she be allocated to the HRC 2 level
5 should be denied. However, Appellant's position number NQ70 should be reallocated back to the
6 Human Resource Consultant 1 level.

7
8 **V. ORDER**

9 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal on exceptions by Martha Hooper
10 that she be allocated to the HRC 2 level is denied, and her position number NQ70 is allocated to a
11 Human Resource Consultant 1.

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13 DATED this _____ day of _____, 2006.

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15 WASHINGTON STATE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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17 _____
18 Walter T. Hubbard, Chair

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21 Busse Nutley, Vice Chair

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23 Gerald L. Morgen, Member
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